

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claim 12 is requested to be cancelled.

Claims 1 and 9 are currently being amended.

This amendment changes and deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-11 and 13-17 are now pending in this application.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Focke et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,292,060). Claims 1-3, 6, 8, 9, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Delamour et al (U.S. Pat. No. 4,896,787). The Examiner rejected claims 2, 3, 7, 11, 13, 14, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Focke in view of Delamour and further in view of Lewallen (U.S. Pat. No. 3,445,052). Claims 2, 4, 6, 10, and 15 were also rejected under §103(a) as obvious over Focke in view of Lewallen and Delamour in view of Reuter (4,407,427), Jones (U.S. Pat. No. 5,386,817), Darras (U.S. Pat. No. 4,886,049), and Miller (4,387,720). Claims 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, and 14-17 are rejected under §103(a) as being obvious over Delamour in view of Lewallen, Reuter, Jones, Darras, and Miller.

Focke teaches a reusable and largely recyclable folding container. The side walls made of plastic are designed with hinge strips, consisting of the same or a similar material, for the connection of said side walls. In an alternative design, one part of the folding container consists of paperboard and serves for receiving smaller packs, whilst another part, made of plastic as described previously, is designed with hinge strips and is therefore reusable. Focke does not

teach a net of interconnected hinge elements wherein each hinge element includes a first and second edge portions that are encapsulated by and fused to adjacent patents and a hinge portion located between said edge portions.

Delamour discloses a method and system for coupling “male” and “female” elements together by using a hinge with resilient properties. The references discloses that the hinge can be formed from a flexible material such as an elastomer containing butadiene and styrene. Additionally, the patent discloses that the individual elements may be “welded” together. Delamour does not disclose a net of interconnected hinge elements.

Lewallen teaches a hinged laminate comprising three layers—a hinge-forming core layer of thermoplastic material, a nonhinge-forming layer of foamed thermoplastic, and a non-hinge-forming wear-resistant skin layer bonded to the foamed layer. Lewallen does not disclose a net of interconnected hinge elements of a first plastics material and a plurality of panels of a second plastics material wherein each hinge element includes a first and second edge portions that are encapsulated by and fuse to adjacent panels and a hinge portion located between said edge portions.

Reuter teaches a homogeneous, one piece container cover of stiff but flexible material including two or more cover portions interconnected by integral hinges. The hinges include parallel ridge and groove portions extending across the cover but terminating short of the periphery thereof, and nonridged, preferably generally flat hinge portions extending from the ridges to the periphery of the cover. One portion of the cover is adapted to be attached to a flange around the opening of a container, and the other portion or portions can be opened by flexing the hinge portions. Reuter does not, even in combination with the other cited prior art, teach all of the limitations of the claims. Reuter does not teach a net of interconnected hinge elements wherein each hinge element includes a first and second edge portions that are encapsulated by and fused to adjacent panels.

Jones discloses a protective covering for a medical instrument, such as an endoscope. The covering includes an elongated hollow sheath having a wall of flexible material. The sheath is substantially gas and water impervious. The sheath further includes auxiliary access tubes associated with the sheath for providing a variety of functions, such as instrument manipulation, and fluid removal. The distal end of the sheath is provided with a cap having an optically clear window to allow the lens portion of the medical instrument to operate. Jones does not, even in combination with the other cited prior art, teach all of the limitations of the claims. Jones does not teach a net of interconnected hinge elements wherein each hinge element includes a first and second edge portions that are encapsulated by and fused to adjacent panels.

Darras discloses a medical instrument cover having an elongated, generally tubular sheath of an elastomeric material, open at both ends, configured to fit on an endoscope and defining an interior surface. A filament is attached to the interior surface of the sheath and functions to separate the sheath in an elongate direction. In this manner, the sheath is easily removed from the medical instrument which it is covering. Darras does not, even in combination with the other cited prior art, teach all of the limitations of the claims. Darras does not teach a net of interconnected hinge elements wherein each hinge element includes a first and second edge portions that are encapsulated by and fused to adjacent panels.

Miller discloses a transducer that is utilized to transmit pulses of alternating pressure waves into the body of a patient and produce signals in response to reflections from the body. The lens is comprised of a first lens element having a concave face facing the crystals and a second lens element filling the space between. The acoustic velocity of the first lens element is greater than that of the body and of the second lens element, but the acoustic impedance of the lens elements is similar to that of the body. Miller does not, even in combination with the other cited prior art, teach all of the limitations of the claims. Miller does not teach a net of interconnected hinge elements wherein each hinge element includes a first and second edge portions that are encapsulated by and fused to adjacent panels.

Regarding the Examiner's comments in the first paragraph on page 2 of the Office action, claims 1 and 9 have been amended to define the structure of the hinge elements more clearly. According to the revised claims, each hinge element now includes first and second edge portions and a hinge portion that is located between said edge portions, the first and second edge portions being encapsulated and fused to the adjacent panels.

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to specify that the box blank comprises a net of interconnected hinge elements. Neither Focke nor Delamour nor any of the other prior art references discloses a net of interconnected hinge elements. In fact, it can be clearly seen in both Focke, e.g. figs. 2 and 3, and Delamour, e.g. fig. 6, that the hinge elements are discontinuous.

In addition, claims 1 and 9 have been amended to clarify the relation of the hinge elements to the panels. Neither Focke nor Delamour nor any of the prior art discloses hinge elements that are partially encapsulated by and fused to the adjacent panels, as required by the amended claims.

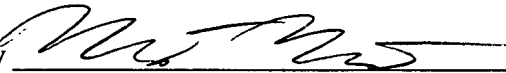
Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 06-1450. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 06-1450. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1450.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

FOLEY & LARDNER
Customer Number: 27433
Telephone: (312) 832-4358
Facsimile: (312) 832-4700

Marshall J. Brown
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 44,566

Matthew Martin
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 53,274